<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPACT ON SYSTEMWIDE NEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BEING ADDRESSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC PROBLEMS BEING ADDRESSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION TO BE SERVED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKPLAN NARRATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATION PLAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISSEMINATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDGET NARRATIVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background/Introduction

[No information provided in this document for this section.]
Maintaining the mission of the California Community Colleges as described in the Master Plan for Higher Education.

his project addresses the Board of Governors' Basic Agenda Priority of providing basic skills and English as a Second Language training for students with disadvantaged learning backgrounds. Unique to this proposal is the plan to integrate training in study techniques, vocabulary and technical term building, analytic skills, reading strategies, course-specific writing and research methods, and test-taking approaches with the content of vocational courses. The pilot phase would be tested in nutrition classes. After evaluation, the materials would be revised into a strategy handbook that could be used by instructors of other vocational courses and would be made available to other community colleges.

Nationwide, the academic society of the 1990's faces a student population in which one in every four college freshmen each year is assigned to remedial classes. California's economic and demographic trends indicate a pressing need to upgrade the language and analytical skills of under-prepared students who are striving to enter the work force: Minorities, new immigrants, high school drop-outs and mature students seeking training and retraining.

Recent statistics documenting Ohlone's changing composition, which is typical of many other California community colleges, demonstrate the problem:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Caucasian</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Non-white</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>48.8</td>
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These students' language and analytical deficiencies can be significantly diminished by integrating language comprehension and usage techniques with course work in the vocational fields they have selected. Ohlone's proposal would use the college's nutrition classes, which have a 50 Percent enrollment of ESL students, to pilot test these methods, then extend the techniques to other vocational programs through a generic strategy handbook for instructors. The handbook would be publicized and made available to other California community colleges as a resource teachers throughout the state could use for directly attacking
language comprehension and usage problems of ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students.

This approach would increase ability of under-prepared students to understand and learn the material presented in class, as well as provide practical review and assistance to other students enrolled in the courses. As a result, more would succeed in their class work, and retention, graduation and workplace success rates would improve. In addition, disadvantaged students would acquire standard English skills that would help them interrelate with others in diverse worksite and social settings.
At Ohlone, 31 percent of the entering students enroll in precollegiate writing, 38 percent in pre-collegiate reading, 37 percent are linguistically differentiated; and 71 percent of the students being tutored in the English Writing Lab speak English as a second language. A problem shared by many of these students is difficulty in carrying over the skills learned in these very focused curricula to their other course work.

This project would provide a continuum between remedial language usage, reading and writing classes and vocational courses by developing a strategy handbook that presents materials and techniques vocational instructors can use to integrate language comprehension, usage, writing and reading skills into their instruction and class assignments. In effect, this would provide students with specialized course-related assistance in classes they have selected and which directly relate to their designated career choice. The handbook would be shared with local high school instructors involved in the TechPrep and similar programs.

Ohlone's project would have the project director, who is a reading/writing specialist, work with the nutrition instructor in identifying methods that help ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students learn the language skills necessary for success in class and their potential workplace.

Nutrition is particularly appropriate as the pilot test course since 50 percent of the students have ESL backgrounds and 75 percent are health majors planning to enter careers that require good communication skills, such as nursing, medicine, respiratory therapy, athletics and dietetics. The instructional techniques developed for this course would be collected in a strategy handbook for workshop presentations to other vocational arts instructors.
Vocational teachers, including the assisting nutrition instructor, have sought curriculum and teaching/learning modifications that would increase the success rates of ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students. These efforts at Ohlone—as well as many other California community colleges—have focused on establishing prerequisites that direct students into remedial reading and writing courses. While some success has been achieved, these students’ capacity to adapt techniques acquired in one learning environment to the requirements of another has been limited.

At the same time, instructors of courses other than those in the English Department too often are not familiar with the remedial training students received, so they cannot integrate these techniques into their own presentations and assignments.

Specific problems this project addresses are as follows:

1. ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students encounter comprehension and retention problems when studying college-level texts for many vocational classes, such as nutrition and those in the programs for Administration of Justice, Business Supervision and Management, Computer Studies, Electronic Technology and Engineering Technology. Sophisticated language patterns, the vocabulary level and specialized language create learning barriers.

2. These students often have limited writing and research skills.

3. Many are unable to perform to their real capacity on tests and when undertaking research assignments.

4. Pre-testing and remedial reading and writing courses have assisted these students; however, many cannot transfer techniques learned in one environment to another.

5. These students tend to become confused and discouraged; retention rates are lower than for students with higher language skills. (At Ohlone, 66 percent of the ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students completed their course work in 1992; 55.2 percent maintained a successful grade point average, "C" or better.)

6. Such problems are common for ESL and educationally disadvantaged students throughout the California community college system.
The proposed solution would start with identification of methods for teaching language comprehension and usage skills in the context of the nutrition course through a team effort by an Ohlone remedial reading/writing instructor and nutrition class teacher. These methods would be pilot tested, revised, then compiled into a strategy handbook presenting a variety of techniques for developing students' language skills in a vocational class. The handbook would be practical in nature and include, but not be limited to: Study techniques, vocabulary and technical term building methods, analytic skill exercises, reading strategies, development of course-specific writing samples, research methods, and identification of representative test categories. Handbook would be distributed to other interested instructors and explained during campus workshops. The handbook and workshops would be publicized and made available to other California community colleges.

This method was selected because it provides a natural continuum of course content from remedial English classes to the career-oriented classes ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students have selected, thus re-enforcing and extending their language and reading skills and assuring higher success rates. In addition, it provides vocational instructors with tested instructional techniques organized for easy integration into their classes, thus enhancing their ability to help students succeed and assuring better retention rates.

Alternatives deemed less practical are: (1) Setting up separate lab sessions for disadvantaged students to concentrate on language skills, which would require a new course that meets minimum enrollment standards and could be canceled, and would be more time demanding for students, predictably resulting in low attendance; (2) expanding language lab tutoring sessions, which have been tried and found lacking because of the difficulty in attracting qualified tutors familiar with the course content, terminology and instructors' assignments, and willing to accept low pay; and (3) providing instructors with assigned time for working individually or in groups with students, which would not be possible with current financial restrictions.
The target population to be served by this project would be underprepared students: Minorities, new immigrants, high school dropouts and mature students seeking training and retraining. The course-specific review of techniques also would benefit other students.

As pointed out in Section III, many of the skills learned by ESL and educationally disadvantaged students in remedial English classes are not successfully transferred to other courses; in reality, they need additional directed practice in applying learned techniques to classroom assignments. Other vocational students have managed to pass or bypass remedial courses, although they do not have the necessary skills. Some, quite often reentry or drop-out students, were skillful enough to pass screening tests, but are untrained in study methods, reading strategies, research methods, analytical thinking and test taking. Many need assistance in improving their vocabulary level and understanding terms specific to course content and in writing coherent, correctly spelled assignments.

Typically, ESL and educationally disadvantaged students lack self confidence, do not recognize the nature of their problems, become discouraged and share their frustration with their peers, rather than the instructor. The result too often is that they find they cannot complete assignments, fall behind in the class, become overwhelmed by the situation and opt out instead of seeking a solution.

Short-term impacts of this project would be making it obvious to students that certain study techniques and reading strategies apply to their text assignments and make it easier to understand and learn the required information, that certain research methods are appropriate for class projects, that certain analytical approaches clarify course concepts, that certain writing techniques are appropriate for homework, reports and test situations, and that certain word attack methods can be employed for improving their vocabulary and adding terms related to course content.

Given specific approaches to use --- from the very beginning of the semester-for approaching course content and assignments, students can gradually work into mastering the content, avoid being overwhelmed by comprehension problems, and have a better chance of realizing immediate small successes that build
into self confidence. They are more likely to share their assurance with their peers and to complete the course.

In the long term, these students are likely to apply the language skills they have practiced to other classes and to future workplace situations, increase their performance to the best of their ability, continue their college studies, achieve a positive academic record and feel more confident when in seeking/maintaining gainful employment.

For Ohlone College, the short-term impact would be improving the quality of instruction, updating vocational curriculum by incorporating language skills, establishing a faculty development program geared to meet student needs, decreasing the teacher frustration created by low student performance, facilitating communication between teacher and student, and attaining higher retention rates.

In the long run, the project could help maintain high class standards, create a more positive learning environment for ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students, make vocational programs more relevant to industry needs, and enhance the recognition and status of Ohlone and the community college system by reaffirming strong support of vocational education that addresses the needs of students and their potential employers. In addition, the strategy handbook could be utilized in contract education programs directed toward improving the language skills of currently employed workers.
Objectives

1. Materials integrating language/reading skills into the nutrition class content and assignments will be completed by January 1994.

2. A strategy handbook explaining project techniques will be completed by March 31, 1994.

3. The handbook and related instructor workshops will be publicized on Ohlone's campus and at other California community colleges by March 31, 1994.

4. At least 50 vocational instructors from Ohlone, other community colleges and local high schools will participate in one of two (or more, if necessary) workshops on "Interactive Language/Reading Skills in the Vocational Classroom" in April and May 1994.

5. Follow-up evaluations of the project's effectiveness will be completed by June 30, 1994.

6. The number of ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students enrolled in Ohlone nutrition classes completing the course with a "C" or better will increase 25 percent by June 1994.

7. The retention rate of these students will be raised 25 percent by June 1994.

8. As follow-up activities, handbooks will be distributed (at cost) to those requesting copies and additional workshops/individual sessions will be held by the project director.
Research and development: During the first five months, the project director and assisting nutrition professor will revise the nutrition course curriculum and develop materials integrating techniques for students to improve their command of text-related vocabulary and worksite nutrition terms, study methods, writing skills, reading strategies, critical and analytical thinking, and research and test-taking techniques.

They also will study instructional methods and projects proven effective in similar situations, research related printed materials, interview nutrition specialists and attend professional workshops and/or conferences that include sessions on this topic area.

Draft preparation, pilot testing, evaluation and revision of materials: The project director and assisting professor will use the drafted materials to co-teach two of the four nutrition classes; the other two classes will follow the existing curriculum. Success and retention rates of students in the two test groups will be compared, contrasted and documented. Course materials will be revised and retested in the spring semester, when final revisions will be made.

Development and duplication of strategy handbook: The project director will identify guidelines that address the language needs of ESL and educationally disadvantaged students and develop a strategy handbook adaptable to other vocational courses. The handbook will be reproduced in an appropriate format and number for dissemination.

Instructor workshops and dissemination: The project director and assisting professor will conduct at least two two-hour workshops, each introducing about 25 Ohlone, other community college and local high school vocational instructors to use of strategy handbook techniques in their classes. If feasible, these will be listed as options for the college's new flex schedule instructor activities. An article explaining the project will be submitted to the campus newsletter and professional publications. The handbook will be disseminated at the workshops and, at cost, to others who have requested copies.

Follow-up study and activities: Statistics will be gathered on the success "C" or better) and retention rates of target group and nontarget group students in the pilot and standard nutrition classes in fall 1993 and in the revised classes in spring 1994. The figures will be compared and contrasted, and the results summarized in the final report.
Evaluation forms eliciting comments on the instruction and workshops will be distributed to all participants, including students and those attending the workshops. The results will be collated and distributed to appropriate campus administrators, committees and English and vocational instructors, and included in the final state report.
A. Project Objectives: It is anticipated that all objectives will be met. Both professors involved in the project have discussed the concept during the past year and are committed to meeting their goals.

B. Impact of the Project: On both a system-wide and campus level, it is expected that instructors trained in use of the strategy handbook will integrate the techniques into their courses. As a result, ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students in vocational classes will achieve higher success rates, both in class and on the job, while course standards are maintained and retention rates improved. On a broader perspective, it should be noted that language skills learned through these classes could be applied by the students to their other courses and utilized at their worksite. Their improved use of standard English can help them overcome many of the difficulties evident in California's increasingly multicultural society.

C. Potential for continued support: Project materials will be institutionalized by vocational administrators, who have endorsed the project, and by instructors who adapt the strategy handbook to their teaching situations. The nutrition professor will revise her course outline to reflect the new content; instructors from other disciplines are expected to make similar revisions. A follow-up workshop will be held as part of the fall 1994 instructor orientation program.

Additional workshops and/or individual sessions for vocational instructors will be scheduled on an "as-need" basis within the campus flex-schedule. The project director will revise the handbook as necessary and continue to offer assistance in this regard. She also may develop contract-ed courses for worksite instruction. If additional funding is required, it will be sought from the district, Ohlone Foundation or through contract-ed agreements.

D. Potential for adaptation to other institutions or programs: The product of this project will be crafted to suit the needs of vocational programs at other colleges and high schools. As is noted in Section IV, many of the language problems encountered by Ohlone's ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students are common to students throughout the state, as well as those in other states. Since many of these students plan to enter vocational fields
that are language-intensive, this project is designed to address their language needs.

The instructor strategy handbook will present standard English comprehension and usage techniques that easily adapt to vocational instruction. These methods include study techniques, vocabulary and technical term building methods, analytic skill exercises, reading strategies, development of course-specific writing samples, research methods, and identification of representative test categories. vocabulary and term building, study methods, writing basics and samples, reading strategies, critical and analytical thinking approaches, and research and test-taking methods. Instructors may select those that suit their concerns and teaching situations.

The strategy handbook and methods for integrating the techniques will be presented at campus workshops open to instructors from other campuses and at conferences. Copies of the project abstract and letters offering copies of the handbook (at cost) will be mailed to Instructional Vice Presidents and Vocational Department administrators at California community colleges and to others as requested by the Chancellor's Office. An article outlining the project and availability of the handbook will be submitted to professional publications, and presentations will be proposed for conferences. If requested, workshops will be conducted at cost for instructors at other institutions.
Two evaluation reports on this project will be submitted:

° Preliminary report-Scheduled for completion by January 31, 1994, this report will summarize (1) the success (measured by course grades) and retention rates for ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students in two control groups for the nutrition course: those enrolled in the two classes utilizing the strategy techniques and those in the two classes not utilizing the techniques; (2) the problems encountered; (3) the methods found to be most effective and relevant; (4) the project’s success in meeting the objectives and deadlines set forth in the Work Plan; and (5) significant achievements. It also will list recommendations for revising strategy techniques for the nutrition course in spring semester.

° Final report-At the close of spring semester 1994, the success and retention rates for ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students in nutrition classes using the revised strategy techniques will be documented. Feedback on the project’s effectiveness will be obtained from participating students and instructors. The results of both processes will be summarized in the final report, along with comments on (1) the problems encountered; (2) the methods found to be most effective and relevant; (3) the project's success; (4) significant achievements; and (5) recommendations and follow-up plans. The report will be communicated to appropriate campus administrators and the Project Monitor by July 1, 1994.
° Product-The product to be disseminated is the strategy handbook for vocational instructors. It outlines text- and course-related vocabulary and term building techniques, study methods, writing basics and samples, reading strategies, critical and analytical thinking approaches, and research and test-taking hints that instructors can incorporate into their teaching situations.

° Target populations-
  1. On-campus vocational instructors of ESL and other educationally disadvantaged students.
     a. Months 2 and 3 (October-November) Publicize the project, materials being developed and upcoming workshops in the campus Newsletter and at departmental meetings.
     b. Months 6 and 7 (February-March) Announce the workshops in the campus Newsletter, departmental meetings, mailbox flyers and memos from appropriate administrators to faculty members in their area.
     c. Month 9 (April) Distribute and explain the strategy handbook at two workshops for vocational instructors.

  2. Off-campus vocational instructors
     a. Months 2 and 3 (October-November) Announce the project and materials being developed through a publicity release to professional vocational publications and the local press.
     b. Months 2 and 3 (October-November) Write to at least four professional organizations and propose a session on the strategy handbook for upcoming workshops and/or conferences.
     c. Months 5 and 6 (January-February) Send a flyer to Instructional Vice Presidents and Vocation Department administrators at California community colleges and local high schools describing the Ohlone workshops and availability of the strategy handbook.
     d. Months 8, 9 10 (April, May, June) Distribute the strategy handbook to requesting institutions and persons.
     e. Months 5-10 (January to June) Present a workshop during at least one professional conference.
The effectiveness of the dissemination plan on campus will be measured by the number of faculty members who request a copy of the strategy handbook and the number who inquire about and participate in a workshop. Off campus, it will be measured by the number of responses received from other institutions, professional organizations and interested individuals.
[No information provided in this document for this section.]